

that this dowry system entirely blights married life. As often as not the dowry itself is a mere snare and delusion — the bride's parents retaining the principal, and merely serving the interest until their death, when, as in the case of Zola's old Vabre, the parental fortune may have entirely disappeared!

In "Au Bonheur des Dames" (VIII) Octave Mouret appears again, a sensualist still but also a man of enterprise, at the head of a "Grand Magasin de Nouveautfe," a Temple of Temptation, which revolutionises trade and panders to the feminine love of finery. Here the *bourgeoisie* is shown elbowing the class immediately below it, a world of *employes*, clerks, shopmen and shop-girls, whose lives, likewise, are full of evil. But again a girl of admirable rectitude, Denise Baudu, comes forward to illumine the novelist's pages, and redeem and ennoble the man who has hitherto regarded her sex as an instrument or a toy.

"When Zola has cast Octave Mouret at the feet of Denise, thereby exemplifying a pure woman's influence over man, he again transfers his scene from bustling Paris to a lonely region of the southern provinces, there to follow the career of Octave's brother, Serge. In "La Paute de l'Abb6 Mouret" (IX) the battle is again one between woman, love, and man; but a new factor appears — religion — for Serge is a priest, bound by the unnatural vow of his calling, one of

hysterical, mystical temperament also,
enslaved by the
superstitions of his creed. In his tumble-down
parsonage
and his little, decaying, forsaken church, amid a
semi-savage,
brutish peasantry, he long strives to resist the
cry of nature.
But she at last asserts her might, and the
novelist carries
the reader into the enchanted garden of the
Paradou, where